

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RETENTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN ISIOLO DISTRICT-KENYA

GEORGE MUNGEERA MBIJIWE

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Conferment of Masters Degree in  
Leadership and Education Management of Kenya Methodist University.

MAY 2013

## ABSTRACT

Low retention signifies unfulfilled aim, goals and objectives for the individual, community and the nation as a whole, which translates to wastage. The government has continuously intervened in the provision of free secondary education in Isiolo District, extending government and CDF bursaries to needy students but a number of students actually fail to complete their secondary education. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence retention of secondary school students in Isiolo District. The research targeted 3400 students, 238 teachers, 17 principals and a District Education Officer in Isiolo District making it a comprehensive total of 3,655. Out of this, a sample of 5 principals, 25 teachers, 150 students were picked using systematic sampling and a D.E.O making a total of 181. The research used a descriptive survey research design and systematic random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and observation checklist after a pilot test conducted in Garbatula District in two schools. Analysis was done by use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) frequency and tables. The study revealed that the retention rate in Isiolo District was about 63.98%. From the findings it was concluded that socio-cultural factors impact on student retention in secondary schools within Isiolo District. The main socio-cultural issues that impact negatively on student retention in the district include female genital mutilation (FGM), religion, early marriage, tribal animosity and pastoralism. In addition, the study concluded that some students drop out of schools due to indiscipline cases. The impact of political factors was not one of the main factors that contribute to student drop out in the district. Thus, it was that even though political issues may contribute to student drop out, it is not a main factor in Isiolo District. From the findings it was noted that head teachers use various modalities to reduce student drop outs in their schools. These include involving students in school management through student council, provision of guidance and counseling services and putting in place rules and regulations to encourage discipline in schools. Other factors such as financial constraints, bad government policies, administrative issues, inadequate resources and poor student teacher relation emerged as other contributing factors to student drop out in the district. The study therefore, made various recommendations. First, parents should be sensitized to shun socio-cultural issues that contribute to low retention in Isiolo District. Second, parents and teachers should join hands in order to address the issue of discipline among students in order to increase student retention in secondary schools in Isiolo District. Third, head teachers and politicians should embrace dialogue in order to reduce political interference in the running of schools in the district. Finally, head teachers should be proactive in addressing challenges facing students such as inadequate resources and poor teaching methods.